



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Animal Feeding Operation Updates

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Facing Spring Manure Application Challenges

Warm weather and rain are causing rapid snowmelt this week. The result? Saturated fields, ponding and streams running high.

For livestock producers faced with nearly full storage following a challenging fall, the situation can look grim. But there is hope. We're still a month away from planting, so there's time for the ground to dry out.

"In the meantime, if your storage is close to overflowing, call your local DNR [field office](#) first," says Cindy Martens, acting supervisor in the DNR's Spencer field office. "If you haven't done it already, consider transferring manure to another site you own, or possibly to a neighbor's. Ask yourself, can you transfer within your own system? If not, don't panic, there are still options for land application."

For confinements (totally roofed facilities):

"Many of the tips for [fall confinement site manure application](#) are still valid. Land apply to flat fields, far from creeks and tile intakes, and get DNR's written permission before applying on snow-covered or frozen ground (at least until April 1)."

Martens cautions confinement producers to apply as little as possible, removing only what is necessary to increase manure storage capacity. Consider partially filling tankers to avoid getting stuck or compacting the field. All surface land application must meet [separation distances](#) from sensitive areas or be incorporated on the same date.

For open feedlots (uncovered or partially covered facilities):

Land application restrictions on frozen and snow-covered ground do not apply to open feedlots, dry manure, small animal feeding operations (SAFOs with 500 or less animal units), or manure that is injected or can be incorporated within 24 hours.

Although legally allowed to land apply manure on frozen and snow-covered ground, feedlot producers should know that late winter application on snow-covered ground is likely to cause runoff and a water quality violation. See Iowa State University's [Winter Manure Management](#). "It's important to apply solids or feedlot effluent in a way that prevents runoff," Martens said. "Follow application tips for confinements."

If you can do it safely, gain more storage space by moving solids and ice chunks from settling areas to the middle of a field. If you can't prevent a basin from overflowing, call the [DNR field office](#) to discuss other options.

Facilities with a national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit may discharge to a water body, but only when rainfall exceeds the 25-year, 24-hour precipitation event. That's roughly 5 inches of rainfall falling within 24 hours.

All producers:

If you have a manure discharge or a basin overflows, call the 24-hour DNR spill line at 515-725-8694 to [report the spill](#).



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